

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 02492 201138Z

43

ACTION EUR-08

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9645

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 2492

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IT

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S CALL ON FONMIN RUMOR

1. I HAD AN HOUR'S MEETING WITH FONMIN RUMOR AT HIS HOME ON TUESDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 18. THE CONVERSATION COMMENCED WITH THE FONMIN EXPRESSING HIS STRONG DISAPPOINTMENT THAT PRESIDENT FORD WOULD BE TRAVELING TO EUROPE AND THAT ITALY WAS NOTABLY ABSENT FROM THE LIST OF HOST COUNTRIES. HE MENTIONED THAT PRESIDENT FORD HAS ACCEPTED PRESIDENT LEONE'S INVITATION TO VISIT ITALY AND THAT THE OMISSION OF ITALY WOULD BE HARD TO UNDERSTAND AND EXPLAIN HERE. WE ARE ALL WELL AWARE OF ITALY'S SENSITIVITIES ON THIS ISSUE AND THE IMPORTANCE THAT THEY PLACE IN BEING CONSIDERED AMONG THE "BIG FOUR" IN EUROPE. I ASSURED THE FONMIN THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO OFFICAL ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE PRESIDENT'S TRIP TO EUROPE AND THAT I UNDERSTOOD SUCH A TRIP WOULD

ONLY TAKE PLACE IN CONNECTION WITH THE PROPOSED SUMMIT-LEVEL CONCLUSION OF THE CSCE. IT WOULD SEEM OBVIOUS THAT THE SITUATION AT GENEVA WAS MUCH TOO UNCERTAIN FOR THE PRESIDENT TO MAKE FIRM PLANS FOR

SUCH A TRIP. I ASSURED HIM THAT BEFORE ANY DECISION ON PRESIDENTIAL TRAVEL WAS MADE, I WOULD BE EMPHASIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF A VISIT TO ITALY. THE FONMIN EXPRESSED A GOOD DEAL OF CONCERN OVER THIS MATTER AND WAS RELIEVED THAT THE EARLY PRESS REPORTS WERE IN ERROR.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 ROME 02492 201138Z

2. RUMOR WAS PLEASED WITH THE DEPARTMENT'S EXPRESSION OF APPRECIATION

TION FOR THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT'S SUPPORT FOR OUR POSITION IN PROCEDU
RAL
QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO THE ISSUE OF PARTICIPATION AT THE LAW OF WAR
CONFERENCE BY REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PROVISIONAL REVOLUTIONARY GOVERN-
MENT OF VIETNAM.

3. I THEN INDICATED TO RUMOR THE CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE WHICH WE
ATTACHE TO PROMPT AND UNRESERVED ITALIAN ADHERENCE TO THE NPT. RUMOR
INDICATED THAT THE COUNCIL OF MINSTERS WOULD BE PASSING ON THIS MATTER

THIS WEEK AND THAT IT WOULD BE IMMEDIATELY SUBMITTED TO THE PARLIAMENT

FOR RATIFICATION. RUMOR EXPRESSED ITALIAN CONCERNS FOR THEIR ABILITY
TO CONTINUE TO MAKE ADVANCEMENTS IN NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY FOR PEACEFUL
USES. I ATTEMPTED TO REASSURE THE FONMIN ON THIS POINT AND EMPHASIZED
THE NEED FOR ITALY'S RATIFICATION OF THE TREATY TO ENCOURAGE BROADER
GLOBA L COOPERATION IN THE NONPROLIFERATION EFFORT AND TO PERMIT THE
BENELUX COUNTRIES AND THE FRG TO COMPLETE THEIR ACCESSION PROCEDURES.

I ALSO MADE THE POINT THAT SUCH REATIFICATION WOULD ASSURE ITALY'S
FULL PARTICIPATION IN THE MAY NPT REVIEW CONFERENCE. ALTHOUGH I
AM SIRE THAT THE TREATY WILL BE SUBMITTED TO THE PARLIAMENT QUICKLY
FOR RATIFICATION, BASED ON SOME OF THE CONCERNS THAT RUMOR EXPRESSED,
I THINK WE MAY HAVE TO REMIND HIM OF THE HISTORY OF THE NPT.

4. I THEN DELIVERED AND WE DISCUSSED OUT DIPLOMATIC NOTE, EXPLAINING
OUR RECENTLY ENACTED LEGISLATION PERTAINING TO THE SETTLEMENT OF
CLAIMS
IN THE UNLIKELY EVENT OF A NUCLEAR ACCIDENT INVOLVING THE NUCLEAR
REACTOR OF A U.S. WARSHIP. IN MY DISCUSSION, I DREW UPON THE
TALKING POINTS PROVIDED IN DEPARTMENT'S AIRGRAM A-292. I INDICATED
THAT OUR NEW LAW OFFERS A STRIGHTFORWARD, UNQUALIFIED ASSURANCE
THAT THE USG WILL ACCEPT MERITORIOUS CLAIMS FOR NUCLEAR REACTOR-
RELATED DAMAGE INVOLVING OUT NUCLEAR-POWERED WARSHIPS ON THE BASIS
OF "NO FAULT" LIABILITY. WE WERE, I EXPLAINED, PRESENTING THIS
NOTE FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES AND
RECOGNIZE THAT THERE ARE NO ISSUES CURRENTLY OUTSTANDING WITH THE GOI
REGARDING LIABILITY ASPECTS OF SHIPS' VISITS. THE FONMIN APPRECIATED
OUR EXPLANATION AND SAID HE WOULD REVIEW THE MATTER. A COPY OF THE
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PAGE 03 ROME 02492 201138Z

NOTE IS BEING FORWARDED TO THE DEPARTMENT BY AIRGRAM.

5. WE CONCLUDED WITH A BRIEF CONVERSATION ABOUT THE POLITICAL
SITUATION
IN ITALY. RUMOR JOINS THE LIST OF THOSE WHO ARE CONFIDENT THAT THERE
WILL BE NO CHANGE IN THE MORO GOVERNMENT PRIOR TO THE UPCOMING
REGIONAL ELECTIONS, EVEN THOUGH HE FELT THE SOCIALISTS MIGHT BE MAKING

SOME THREATENING NOISES TO THAT EFFECT FROM TIME TO TIME. AS FAR AS THE REGIONAL ELECTIONS ARE CONCERNED, RUMOR HOPED THAT THE DC PARTY COULD LIMIT ITS LOSSES TO ONE TO TWO PERCENT, A LEVEL WHICH HE PERSONALLY WOULD CONSIDER A MORAL VICTORY FOR THE PARTY SINCE THERE ARE MANY WHO ARE PREDICTING DC LOSSES RANGING FROM FIVE TO EIGHT PERCENT. HE CONFIDED THAT A LOSS OF OVER THREE PERCENT WOULD BE QUITE HARMFUL TO THE DC. IN COMMENTING UPON FANFANI'S CURRENT "LAW AND ORDER THEME", HE FELT IT WAS A GOOD ONE AND WAS HOPEFUL THAT THE PARTY COULD USE IT TO GOOD ADVANTAGE IN THE UPCOMING REGIONAL ELECTIONS. HE SHARED MY VIEW THAT IT WAS NOT ENOUGH FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO BE WORDING "THE THEME OF LAW AND ORDER" BUT THAT SOME ACTION AND SOME TANGIBLE RESULTS WERE NEEDED FOR THIS TO BE EFFECTIVE AS A CAMPAIGN ISSUE.VOLPE

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